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SOCIAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

Letter dated 27 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council

I have the honour to draw your attention to the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as contained in document E/1998/7, which is to be considered under agenda item 14 (e) at the substantive session of 1998 of the Economic and Social Council.

What is of concern to the Vietnamese delegation is paragraph 123 of the above-mentioned report, which describes Viet Nam as "country of origin" for a certain group of people who presently reside in China and mentions "the possibility of voluntary repatriation for those who would wish to return to Viet Nam".

In this connection, I wish to reaffirm the position of the Vietnamese Government, which has been clearly explained at the annual meetings of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, most recently at its 1997 annual meeting, as follows:

> In the late 1970s, a group of Chinese citizens residing in Viet Nam did return to China. They did so in a special circumstance and at the appeal of the Chinese Government. For the past two decades, the life of these people has stabilized in China, their own country, where they should remain. The international community should continue to extend to them necessary assistance. Parties concerned should adopt a forward-looking approach.

The Vietnamese delegation wishes to see the view of the Vietnamese Government as mentioned above duly reflected in the records of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998.

I would like to request you to have this letter circulated as an official document of the substantive session of 1998 of the Economic and Social Council under agenda item 14 (e).

(Signed) NGO QUANG XUAN
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative